

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

ABSOLUTE LIBERTY MAKES LIFE DULL

I could not resist writing Malcolm Stuart a little note saying, "You have put me in rather an awkward position, my dear Malcolm, by saying you cannot sail away until I have paid a visit to the Lady Salvia. Don't you see if I went, my visit would say: 'What's your hurry? Where's your hat?' Let me smile at you a little, for somehow smiling does not come to me easily now.

"It's all nonsense about your not having a good time without me, you know, for with Eliene and Mollie and Donna—Donna Tenny is visiting me and I am going to send her with Mollie and Eliene—you will have the time of your life. Very privately I am going to tell you I expect you to fall in love with Donna and quit your 'sailing around new countries for to see.'

"It would be an ideal arrangement, for Donna would keep you here with us, and I know your friends will be very, very lonely when you again slip out of their lives and go away to parts unknown.—Margie."

Yes, little book, Donna came yesterday following her letter very quickly. I have never seen her look so beautiful. Her lovely white hair has softened her face—her coloring is as delicate as that of a girl of 20.

Donna interests me greatly; she is such a creature of contradictions. One minute she mourns Bill and will not be comforted. The next she is the happiest woman I have ever known. She has brains under that blanched thatch of hers and I love to hear her tell her experiences and what they mean to her.

After hearing her talk, I have almost come to the conclusion that the man was right who wrote, "In her first love a woman loves her lover; ever after, all she loves is love."

I am very anxious to see what re-

actions will come from the meeting of Donna and Malcolm. To me she is almost the most desirable woman I know from a feminine standpoint.

"Do you know, Margie," she said to me yesterday, "I think a woman's whole life is one of negation. Most of all, she must constantly deny herself.

"I don't wonder that Ellen Key says a woman's dangerous age is between forty and fifty. What she did not say, however, seems to me is more significant. It is that very few women wake up to the fact that they have been up to that time under the absolute dominion of something or someone.

"As girls we must subscribe to numberless conventions that are as silly as they are barbarous. After marriage our husbands consciously or unconsciously make a set of rules which we must obey, even if we do not honor them—and widows! Widows, my dear, are always under the eyes of Mrs. Grundy!

"You know, Margie, I have always been a rather cold woman? I do not think any man ever really interested me, but Will. But even before he died I used to see his youth come back to him with the thrill of each new affair, and honestly, Margie, I wished it could come to me. I think that what he used to term jealousy in me was not so much jealousy as envy.

"For a little while after we were separated and I went back to him, I was perfectly happy, but for a long time before he died I was only a tender nurse, in whom he placed all confidence, and then—I was alone.

"You see, dear, it is the old tradition that will not die. We think we love liberty but we really do not realize what liberty means. What we really want is the feeling that we belong."

Little book, little book, do you re-